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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the U.S. Office of Education's attempt to stimulate drug education, and a few exemplary programs amongst those it supports. President Nixon's 1970 National Action Committee on Drug Education set up a program for training classroom teachers, and formulated guidelines for programs to educate people in schools, communities, and on college campuses in an effort to overcome the "national problem of drug abuse." A law was passed and funds were appropriated by Congress to support promising proposals which showed indications of scholarship, understanding and humility. Heavy involvement of youth in planning and conducting the programs was deemed essential. Described are the University of Idaho's crisis intervention telephone answering service, John Hopkins community center's use of information dissemination, counseling and creative therapy, the Ann Arbor University of Michigan's extraordinary array of services for drug users, and the activities of a Brotherhood of black students in New York City. Since the youth are asking the right questions and insisting on the "drug problem" being a "people problem," they may help produce constructive answers. (KS)

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SHIP, CAPTAIN, AND CREW IN EDUCATION:*

Reflections on a Psychedelic Experience

By S. P. Marland, Jr.
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In his letter of invitation, Mr. Wanser explained that the purpose of this conference is, quote, "...to aid the American university community in its attempts to penetrate beyond the superficial symbols of established leadership and into the real workings of government."

I'm not sure I'm the man for the job. Government is such a super-specialized and super-organized enterprise that anyone who works in it for long is bound to feel, on occasion, both superficial and symbolic. Like those wooden figureheads that used to grace the bowsprits of the old sailing vessels, the heads of government agencies usually arrive in port first; frequently, however, we do so with the nagging suspicion that somebody further back on the ship supplied both the navigation and the locomotion.

Hence you or I or all of us may be here under false pretenses. But inasmuch as you <u>are</u> here, and inasmuch as I felt genuinely complimented by the invitation to address you, let me try to describe what the Federal government is doing in education.

Briefly stated, the U.S. Office of Education is trying to stimulate and support a broad, thorough reform of American education. Each of you has heard that song before -- some of you, perhaps, so often that you

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are now wincing at the thought of having to sit through yet another rendition. I risk provoking tedium because, in the last few years, we have added something new to our effort: the recognition that, if we are to change social institutions that need changing, we will frequently have to change ourselves first.

To explain what I mean, I would like to explain for a moment a concrete illustration of active educational initiative, one that deals with a serious concern of the institutional presidents among you, and of interest to most of the student presidents among you. I refer to education on the use of drugs.

In 1970, recognizing that drug-abuse was sufficiently widespread to constitute a national problem, President Nixon formed a National Action Committee on Drug Education. This was composed of 31 psychologists, pharmacologists, educators, doctors, jurists, and students --- two from high school, three from college. It was chaired by Dr. Helen Howard Nowlis, then professor of psychology and research consultant in student affairs at the University of Rochester.

The Committee was given a number of duties, spelled out in the usual awesome government prose -- but they all boiled down to a single mission: help us in the Office of Education get something going, fast. The President felt that the urgency of action in this area ruled out the usual, leisurely process of program development. We needed a crash program.

The Committee responded quickly but responsibly. First, it developed a training program for classroom teachers and got it going. Next, it formulated guidelines for three kinds of programs: one to be conducted

by State departments of education in the schools; a second to be conducted in communities by consortia of local organizations; and a third to be conducted on college campuses. A law was passed; Congress appropriated funds. Finally, from the proposals submitted to the Office of Education in response to those guidelines, the Committee helped us select 110 that seemed most promising. You may be perceiving now, on a relatively narrow but important point, how government operates in education.

Carrying the illustration further, I would like to discuss the general tenor of the college programs. Before doing that, however, and by way of illustrating what I said earlier about changing ourselves before we try to change institutions, I want to discuss what the drug education programs <u>might</u> have been.

They might have been an authoritarian, moralistic, crusading, scolding grab-bag of do's, don't's, and shame-on-you's. They might have said, don't try marijuana, for it will inevitably lead you to heroin. They might have stressed that drugs are against the law, and if you get caught, we will lock you up and throw away the key. They might have said that anybody who uses drugs is trying to escape reality, and is therefore not only criminal but weak and spineless. They might have asked, what's wrong with you young people? Why can't you be responsible and upstanding and meet the inevitable trials and disappointments of life with the same fortitude as your parents -- without the artificial support of drugs?

Our educational program might have been <u>all</u> these things -- but luckily for us, when President Nixon formed the Committee, he didn't choose its members because they had made a bundle, or were staunch

Republicans, or pledged allegiance to the flag every morning before brushing their teeth. He told his talent scouts that he wanted effective, informed, wise people -- not just well-intentioned people.

He got them. The program-guidelines that they devised, and the individual projects that OE selected for support on the basis of those guidelines, reflect a scholarship, an understanding, and I would say even a humility rarely found in government programs.

Scholarship because the guidelines insist on "an unbiased presentation of facts and information about drugs and drug use." The question, "What is the effect of drugs on the human organism?" has no answer. One must ask which drug, at what dosage and frequency of use, on what kind of person, and under what conditions? As a simple illustration of the pertinence of these questions, one researcher found that soldiers seriously wounded in World War II at the battle of Anzio in Italy required much lower dosages of pain-killing drugs than did civilians recovering from minor surgery in hospitals. Part of the explanation offered is that, while civilians viewed any physical pain as an intrusion on the regularity of their lives, combat soldiers were accustomed to hardship. Moreover, they knew that a serious wound was their "ticket home" -- and the prospect of early discharge under circumstances that suggested heroism was a much more effective pain-killer than any needle could confer.

Understanding because the guidelines urge an attack on the causes of drug-use rather than on its symptoms. Drugs do cause perceptible effects on the human organism -- otherwise, they wouldn't be used.

Some of those effects are pleasant; some of them can even be temporarily beneficial in certain situations, such as alleviating anxiety in a person faced with a high-pressure assignment so that he can perform without undue fear of failure. Yet every use of drugs exacts its toll. The question for us in education, then, is not so much whether people use drugs as why they use them -- and the challenge to us as educators is to help them find healthy alternatives to drug-use as solutions to their problems.

Humility because as the members of the Committee pointed out again and again, the major difference between adult use of drugs and youth use is legality. My generation is disturbed about marijuana, heroin, LSD, mescaline, peyote, and all the rest -- partially, I suspect, because these drugs are unfamiliar to the majority of us, and because the term drug itself suggests exotic and very likely evil compounds from far-away places which we recall from a dozen Alan Ladd movies, and are therefore synonymous with iniquity. Yet at least half of the adult population so ready to denounce depravity among the young condones its own use of many drugs: nicotine, caffeine, alcohol, tranquilizers, sleeping pills, pills to keep you awake on a long drive, pills to prevent air- and sea-sickness, pills to prevent conception. Aspirin is a drug --- a useful drug, a beneficial drug, but one that can kill. All these drugs exact their costs. My generation, I'm afraid, has taken the position that everyone is free to go to blazes in his own way as long as it's legal.

I mean none of this to suggest that we are minimizing the problem of drug-abuse. I, as one father, grandfather and school teacher, am deeply troubled. My generation is seriously concerned about the younger

generation's use of drugs; we will continue to be -- and I think we ought to be. O.E. is seriously concerned. But my own attitudes are not of central importance here, for I do not possess the professional competence to speak authoritatively about the effect of drugs. What is of central importance is the guiding philosophy behind our drug-education projects -- a philosophy developed by highly qualified professional specialists.

I have mentioned a few of the guidelines that comprise this philosophy. I have not yet mentioned one of the most important: "the heavy involvement of youth in planning and conducting programs." This is a guideline for all our drug-education programs; for the college- and university-based programs, however, it is more than a guideline. It is an absolute requirement. Our handbook for the preparation of proposals under the Drug Abuse Education Act of 1970 states that college- and university-based programs -- and I quote -- "must be initiated, designed, and directed by students."

To some members of my generation, this may sound like an abdication of Federal responsibility -- an invitation to total permissiveness at worst and a poorly calculated risk at best. Some might call it "putting the rabbits in charge of the lettuce patch."

It is none of these. In part, it is a recognition that adults have responded in an hysterical, hypocritical and nonrational way to the use of drugs among youth by approving harmful drugs such as alcohol and nicotine, while disapproving other drugs that have found favor with youth. In part, it is a pragmatic recognition that scare-tactics just won't work, for adults

have opened a credibility gap between themselves and their children. If the purposes of education include developing in humans the capacity to sift information and draw logical conclusions from it, and if we have any faith in the ability of our schools, colleges and universities to develop that capacity, then we must be willing to trust our young people to choose responsible behavior once they have been given the information on which to base free choices.

Our trust in this exercise so far has been fully justified. We are now supporting 20 campus-based programs -- some of which were operating before we got into the act, some of which are just getting started. We hope from these pilot projects to derive some principles that can be put to work on campuses across the Nation, once we've had the chance to see what works and what doesn't.

Here are some of the things that seem to be working:

At the University of Idaho, the student-run, Nightline Drug Education team has included as part of its program a "crisis intervention" telephone-answering service that operates from 8 p.m. to 2:30 a.m. Those hours were chosen because other service agencies in the area operate from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The operating philosophy of these agencies, reports the student-director of Nightline, seems to be that "If you can't schedule your problems during working hours, don't have them."

People do not schedule their problems that neatly, of course, so trained volunteers ranging from 16 to 60 are there to help -- and I stress help, not preach. The anonymity of callers is protected; in fact, the telephone-answerers prefer that callers do not give their names.

Callers have included youngsters asking for information about drugs -- and others who need help in coming down from bad trips. They have also included a striking percentage of middle-aged and elderly adults; people with marital problems, despondent drunks who feel they've come to the end of the line, lonely people who vow they're 30 minutes away from suicide. Some problems are minor: one student called for help on a math assignment, and another -- a victim of Men's Lib -- wondered how to broil a steak.

A housewife-volunteer was there to handle that request, but Nightline doesn't try to handle them all. In extreme cases, it refers callers to competent professionals; the service does not offer cutrate psychiatry or amateur medicine. It does offer a sympathetic, concerned ear and reliable information to people in trouble -- especially in trouble with drugs --- and it has won the support of agencies ranging from the University itself and church officials to the county prosecuting attorney.

At Johns Hopkins University, students have organized a community center in a low-income area of Baltimore where six youngsters and adults died of drugs last year. Their program of information and counseling attempts, in the students' words, to "bridge the gulf between drug users and the 'straight' society... by supplying a forum in neutral territory." Their Center goes beyond providing information, however; it offers a program of creative therapy designed to "revitalize the imagination" of young drug-users by "stimulating undeveloped talents." In addition to helping the local community organize its own athletic and outdoor recreation programs, the Center provides workshops, facilities, and equipment for

motion and still photography, film processing, oil painting, commercial and creative art, silk-screen printing, and the performance, recording, and even composition of music.

In Ann Arbor, where there are an estimated 500 narcotics addicts, University of Michigan students realized that the community already offered an extraordinary array of services for drug-users: two 24-hour "hotlines"; "mobile crisis teams" of professionals who provided psychological and medical treatment to emergency cases in their own homes; a Free Medical Clinic operated by volunteer medical students and faculty; on-the-street counseling services for hard-drug-users provided by an organization called The Tribal Council, and even a legal methadone clinic for extreme cases of addiction. The problem was that these services operated autonomously, for the most part, instead of offering the comprehensive service they could offer -- if somebody would just put it all together.

With the backing of the University's Office of Student Services, the students assumed this job. They contacted the other organizations, determined the strengths and limitations of each, arranged for exchanges of specialists among them, and worked out a comprehensive, continuing program that serves both students and community. Moreover, by working with faculty, administrators, residence-hall counselors and students already active in drug education, they have incorporated a total education-prevention-care package into the University's own structure. Thus no University of Michigan student has to go beyond his own campus for help; nor will any be prevented from seeking it because of the stigma often associated with going to an "outside" organization that specializes in drug problems.

To repeat, all these programs were initiated, designed, and are being conducted by students. Not all of the 20 campus-based programs will be successful; we recognize that they _are_ experiments, and that any genuine experiment carries with it the risk of failure. If a project _does_ fail, we will make every effort to find out why, so that we can learn from our errors as well as our successes.

I could go on with many other illustrations, such as the inspiring work of a group of black students in a New York City high school. They call themselves The Brotherhood. Working under a gifted counsellor, with a minimum of funds, these students have virtually taken charge of the drug problem in their school, including the identification and public denunciation of pushers who frequented their building.

To return to the point at which I started, USOE hopes to help American educational institutions reform themselves. One of the crucial distinctions we have to make in that effort is between education and training -- a distinction well made by Nevitt Sanford in his book, _Self and Society_: "True education," he writes, "is liberating and differentiating. If it is successful, it makes every individual different from every other... Training tends to process individuals so that they are more alike, speaking the same language, sharing the same professional baggage, engaging in the same kinds of activities in the same more or less prescribed way."

An excellent educational institution should do both. I am afraid, however, that in our drive for efficiency and production, our industrialized society's tendency to view human beings as "resources" who can or should

contribute to the Gross National Product, our society has emphasized training at the expense of education. The result is that we have a great number of highly skilled people going through their daily paces with amazing proficiency -- but wondering whether they are failing to perform in aspects of life that have nothing to do with making either money or widgets. While I have, as many of you know, pushed hard this past year for career education for all, I want to make it clear that career education <u>includes</u> training --- but the fulfillment of the individual in <u>all</u> his parts is the real goal. That is why we call it career education, not career training.

The stress implicit in the human-technological relationship --- the conflict between society's needs and individual needs --- has produced, writes Dr. Nowlis in a remarkable best-seller named Drugs on the College Campus, "many symptoms of the inability of adults to adjust to or cope with the pressures we now have -- six to eight million alcoholics, many more millions whose lives are affected by alcoholics, uncounted millions psychologically dependent on a variety of drugs, thousands of suicides, increasing divorce rates, violent protests in major cities. We have not yet solved even the initial problem of asking the right questions about the origin of these contemporary symptoms."

I am not sure that students will do a better job of producing answers to contemporary social problems than their elders have done. But after looking through their responses to our request for proposals dealing with drug use and abuse; after noting their insistence that the "drug problem" is really a "people problem"; and after being struck again and again by their desire to liberate drug-users by viewing them as individuals with

distinctive problems rather than as a class of repulsive humans with the same problem --- I cannot help feeling that students are, at least, asking the right questions.

Educators and other social engineers have generally proceeded in the assurance that they had the right answers; our procedure has been to bully the objects of our expertise until they finally accepted our superior wisdom. In that spirit, we have tended to resist student demands for participating in the design of their own education.

The Office of Education's experience with drug education programs convinces me that student participation is not only just but productive. That experience has been both sobering and mind-expanding. It has reminded me and my colleagues in government that we have much to learn, and that learning -- unaided by chemicals -- can be a truly psychedelic experience, a good trip.

From my position beneath the bowsprit, therefore, I want to urge my colleagues at the head of colleges and universities to invite their crews to assist in the navigation and locomotion as we set out on a common mission of reforming education. Drug education has been for us a starting point; but the entire academic setting, I am convinced, can benefit from this sort of joint scrutiny, evaluation, and revision. Responsibility honestly shared by those in authority, I hold, will be honestly accepted by the young --- with profit for both.

Now it is time to invite your questions. Some of them, I am sure, will deal with drugs and drug education. Because I am a neophyte in these matters, I have asked the new director of our Drug Abuse Education Program to share the podium with me. She is the same Dr. Helen Nowlis whom

I mentioned earlier in these remarks; about four weeks ago, the University of Rochester's loss became the Office of Education's gain. After a month of working with her and of being challenged by her, I can assure you that she is neither superficial nor symbolic. She is part of the establishment of education --- and education at all levels in America is the better for her presence.

This year we will devote $13 million to drug education --- out of a total Office of Education budget of $5.1 billion. Thus you can see that drug education, important as it is, represents a small piece of our overall efforts and responsibilities.

Yet this single program offers a vignette of the Federal Government at work, illustrating how OE stimulates the Administration on an important issue, finds Administration consensus, helps to initiate legislation, delivers the money to the responsible parties, and monitors the effects. Indeed, while much of our Governmental responsibility is of a fixed-formula nature, I hope that more and more will be characterized by Office of Education people such as Helen Nowlis, ranging widely in their influence in the schools and colleges of the land.